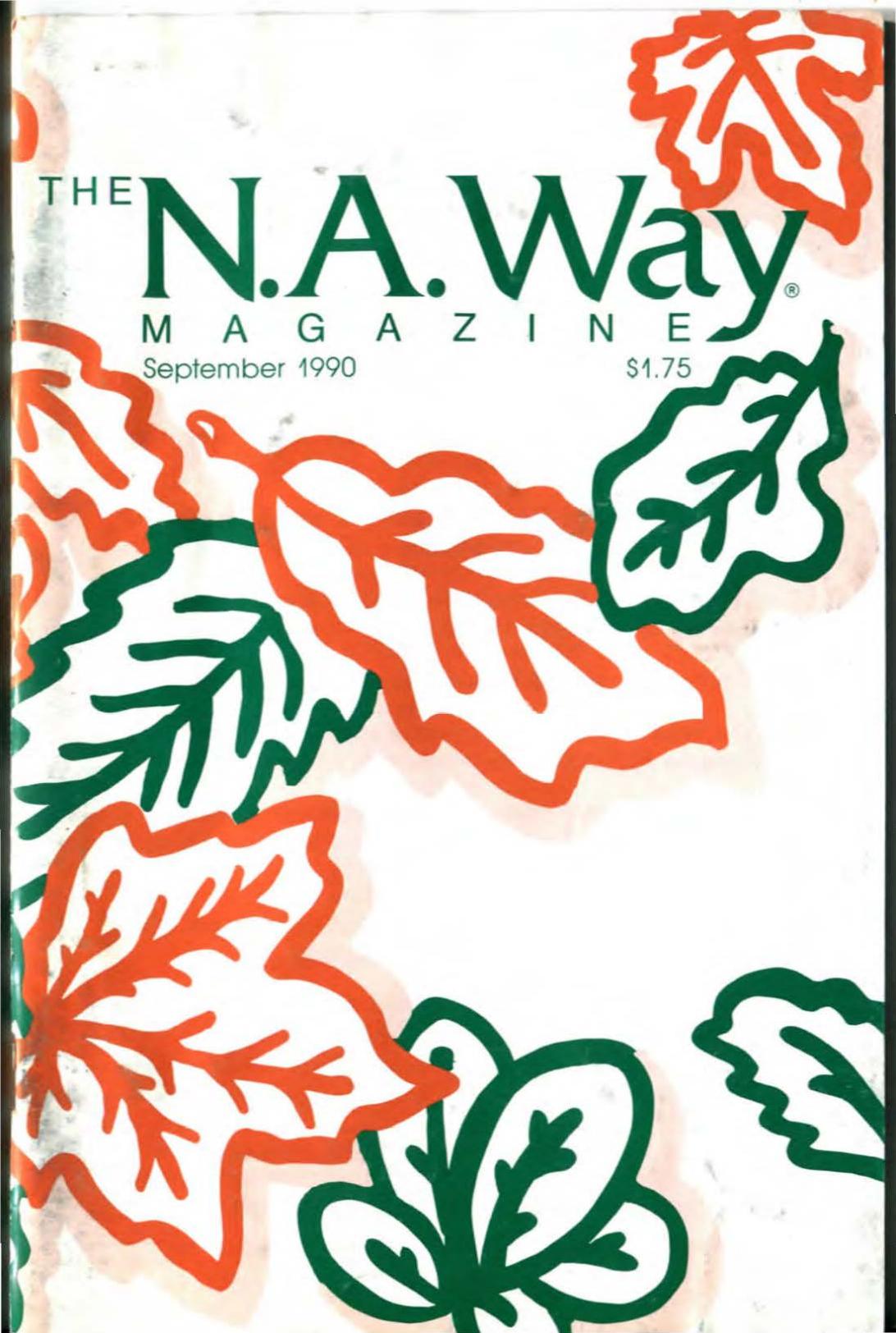


THE
N.A. Way[®]
M A G A Z I N E

September 1990

\$1.75



The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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THE N.A. Way

M A G A Z I N E

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The N.A. Way Magazine welcomes the participation of its readers. You are invited to share with the entire N.A. Fellowship in our monthly international journal. Send us your experience in recovery, your views on N.A. matters, and feature items. All manuscripts submitted become the property of World Service Office, Inc.

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Standing together

(Editor's note. The following article is an abbreviated copy of a talk shared in North Carolina about three years ago. We are grateful for permission to publish it here.)

I travel with my work and I have the opportunity to go to other parts of the country and its real nice. Its real nice to walk into a room full of people and introduce myself as an addict and a member of Narcotics Anonymous and have people come up and hug me and say they are glad to see me.

But I have had some experiences that really threw me sideways for a while. My belief in a higher power...it really made me question what I believed. But I am glad to tell you that what I found was that my faith in my higher power is stronger than its ever been.

My 17 year-old son was using with some people down south and his heart stopped and he died. Now for a recovering addict who had been in recovery for 16 of those 17 years that he was old, who had tried on numerous occasions to get him to practice

and see this way of life, that is kind of hard to swallow. When you sit in a meeting like I sat in yesterday and we talk about this "lineage of recovery" a part of me kept going "Well, why couldn't he do it?" You know? "Why couldn't I carry it to him?" I had to accept that I wasn't God. I had to accept the fact that I didn't know the answer and I didn't know the solution.

What it made me understand again about God is that he ain't Santa Claus and that he doesn't prevent anything bad from ever happening in my life, but what he will do is help me through it if I ask Him. That's what I found out. That's what this program has been about for me.

I think if there is anything I want to share its what I believe to be the truth, and its what is read at every one of our meetings and its what I think made the difference. I saw it help once before and I didn't stay. I came back and I did, and I used to wonder what made the difference. I still don't understand 100 percent, except I do know that something in me decided that I wanted what you had and I was willing to make the effort to get it. That to me may be one of the most profound things we read in any meeting in this fellowship.

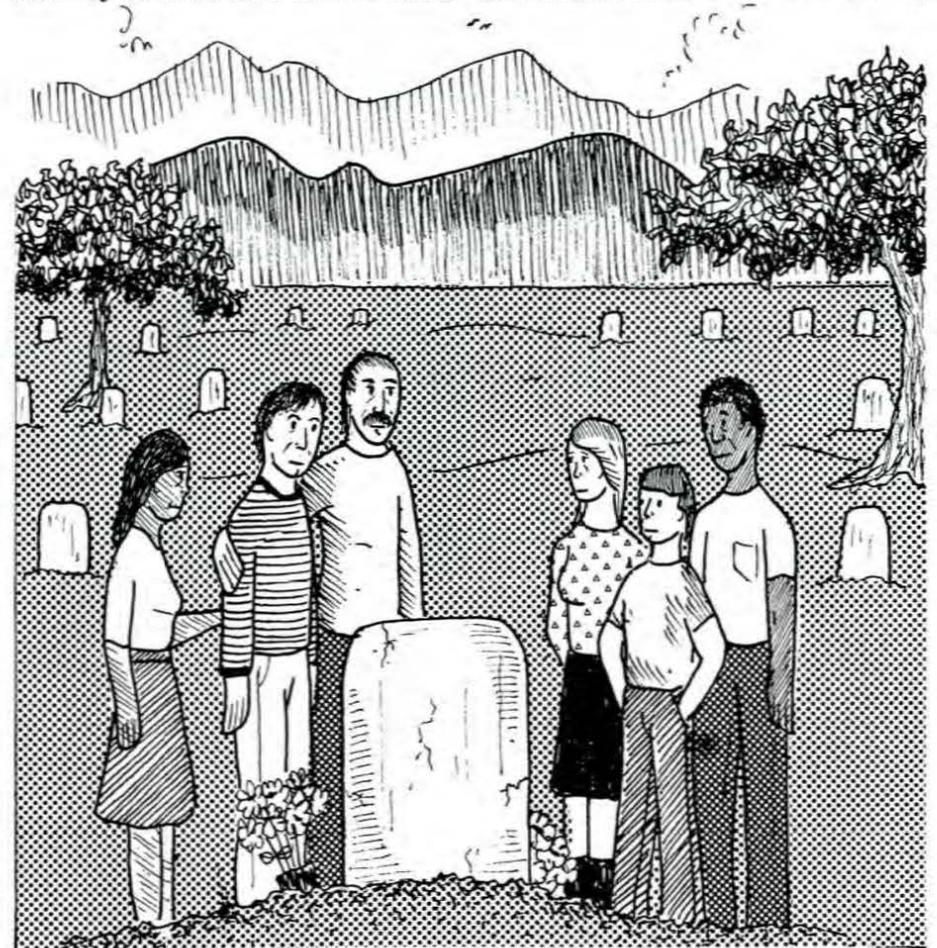
The first time I came around I thought maybe I wanted it, if I could work it into my life somehow. If this was the way to stay out of trouble, then, yeah, that appealed to me. I liked some of the people I met, during a period of time I think I would have signed my name in blood that I would never use again, and that lasted almost 89 days. And I didn't even understand what happened, you

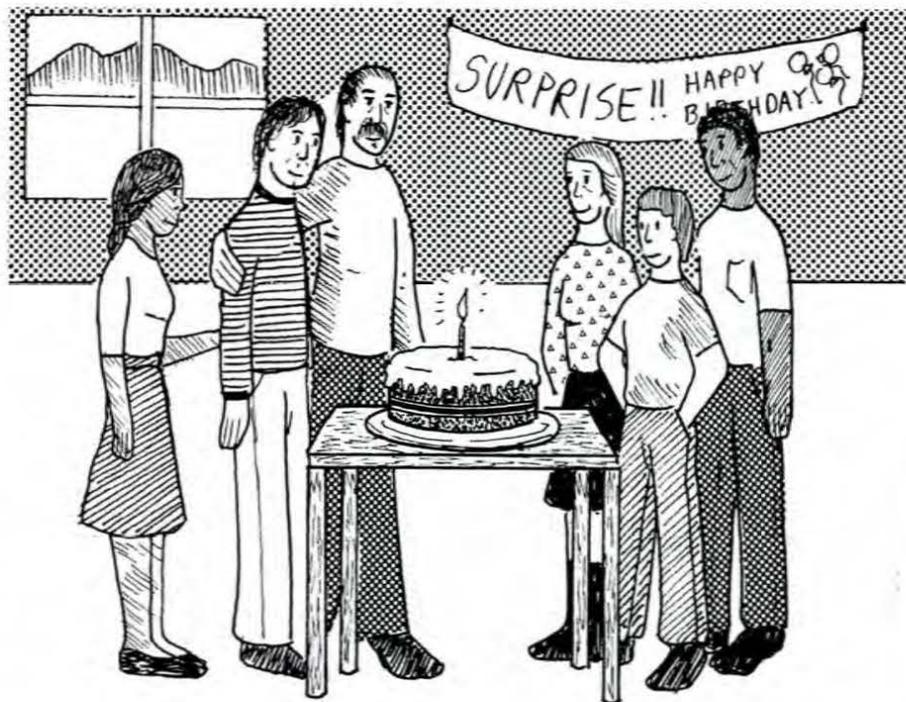
know, except that I began to think *you don't really think like me, you don't really feel like me, you don't really understand me*, and I quit hearing what you were sharing and started comparing and I slowly backed myself right out the door.

The best description I ever heard of this disease is that it wants to get me alone in that corner and cut my throat. That may be the best description I ever heard of this and I believe that's true. Isolation seems to be the best way to do it. And that's what I

fought with for a long time. I want to share about God as I understand Him today. Cause that's why I'm still here.

Since Oct 10, 1971, I haven't used anything. I'm one of those, I guess, that went through that transition, you know, but what saved my life was addicts. What saved my life were people that understood my thinking and the lifestyle I was coming from and the way I felt. N.A. has been my home for a long time now and I'm very grateful for it. I never for some reason had a lot of trouble feeling





at home early on. Where I felt at home was where a bunch of us... we were everything... "dual addicted," "alcoholic-pot-heads," "alcoholic-heroin-addict," "alcoholic pill-addicts..." where a bunch of us would get in this van and start riding around. We'd ride around the perimeter of the city, and a lot of those people are clean today, I am grateful to say.

I was sharing about my son's death, but its two things that have been really something in my recovery this year. One is I got nailed with a birthday surprise party. I mean walking in the door like Ricky and Lucy. I mean "SURPRISE!" There was something real special in that room. It was a lot of fun that day.

But I also got to share with you that most of those same people standing with me that day were standing with me at the gravesite where I buried my son.

That's the way this fellowship is... good and bad, up and down, left and right, that's the way it is. The people here are with you. It took me so long to really become a part of that and really understand it. The miracle, if you want to call it that, of giving in this fellowship, and the payback.

I believe I have found something that works in my life. It wasn't what I thought it would be.

Anonymous, S.C.

Minnesota miracles

To all the members of Narcotics Anonymous, "Hello from Minnesota." I am from a small community where Narcotics Anonymous will be celebrating its sixth year in October 1990.

I am writing from my heart to whomever will listen. I envy people from large cities because of all the meetings you have and all that anonymity. No, actually, I don't envy you. I just feel that you are lucky to be blessed with so many different types of meetings.

I believe in this program and the things it has taught me, spiritually, emotionally and physically.

I had a year and three months in another fellowship when a person I sponsored introduced me to N.A. I went thinking it was just another Twelve Step fellowship and to fulfill my sponsee's request. The meeting I attended was on Thursday in the basement of a church and had started four or five months earlier. The room was darkened and candles were lit and the meeting began with the Serenity Prayer and then came the readings. I introduced myself as "alcoholic and chemically dependent." By the end of the meeting something

had happened to me. I am an addict, and from that day forward I introduced myself as an addict.

I continued to go to that meeting weekly, and to A.A. for about six months, because I needed more than just one meeting a week. In A.A. I introduced myself as an alcoholic (First Step, First Tradition). I came to love N.A. and the people in N.A. with all of my heart.

I then was introduced to my first N.A. area meeting. I met GSR's from five other groups. This was in March of 1984.

There I heard about the language and the philosophy of N.A. I also learned that there was no less than fifty miles between groups and some were as much as 150 miles from the group I attended. There were probably eight meetings throughout our area, which covered about 12,000 square miles of mid-Minnesota.

I ask if you addicts with fifteen or twenty years of N.A. service remember the pain, the love, the fear, the sometimes hopeless feelings as you tried to deliver the clean message of Narcotics Anonymous to a group of alcoholics and chemically dependent people. If you remember the time your area died through apathy and dissention. The feeling of being alone and how the ego got in the way of our love for others. I will not allow myself to forget.

Our first N.A. meeting will soon be celebrating six years of existence. I would not give up one moment of the time I spend, not one bit of the pain, not one tear I have shed in helping support N.A. in our area.

New areas have formed, new groups

have formed (we now have one every night) and new love has been secured in my heart. I ask that the next time you sit by a newcomer as he introduces himself as "alcoholic and chemically dependent" you think about these things. This story is one person's perspective and does

not presume to speak for the fellowship as a whole. When I started in N.A. the Upper Midwest Region was quite small. The Minneapolis/St. Paul Area had only thirteen meetings listed. Now there are more than 75 and it has split into three separate areas. The Fargo/Moorhead Area had seven

meetings and West Central had eight and included two more in South Dakota. Now it has also separated into three areas; the

Southwestern Area and the Central Area. I am so proud to be a member of N.A. and love this fellowship. Thank you N.A. for the honor of serving. My heart goes out to the Winnipeg Area and its members who are going through a tough time. I understand and pray for you. North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Winnipeg, thank you.

Joe J., St. Cloud, MN

Healing the heart

Thanks for being my meeting in print. The "N.A. Kids Are Great" (June 1990) article helped me feel less alone and more aware of the blessings that come with starting recovery when already a mom. I get so weighed down by shame and guilt sometimes that I feel like I have a gunny sack over each shoulder with those labels on them.

My kids were six and eight when I finally walked into my first N.A. meeting and my heart said, "you're home at last." (I still get a lump in my throat when I remember the feelings of those first welcoming hugs and assurances that I was—at last—in the right place at the right time).

I got my first taste of "waking up" to life without drugs when I was pregnant and I didn't understand that what was wrong was that I don't know how to live and enjoy life with or without the use of drugs—not without a loving caring Higher Power, I don't. And during those pregnancies six and eight years before recovery I only experienced a taste of abstinence. At that time staying clean for a week was a very long time. By the time my kids were four and six I was at one of my worst bottoms lying in a hospital bed with I.V.'s and oxygen to stay alive, floating over my ruined body and deciding to live because no one else would take care of my children or love them the way I wished I could. It still took me two more years to find recovery after that. I tried psychiatry, religion and of course different "medicines" prescribed by doctors in order to heal my sick soul. I still didn't get it... that I am a sick and suffering addict who was going to the end of the road before saying, "hi, I'm _____ and I'm an addict." Thank God for our "How it Works" meeting reading and the "Am I an Addict? I.P. and thank God for the "burning desires" request at the end of meetings—my dear friend whose first anniversary it was that night

helped nudge my wavering elbow upward so that I did share my tears, wonderment and hope. And I got hugs and "you're in the right place," and "keep coming back—we need you too." Being the "most important person," as a newcomer with four days clean meant so much!

I never in all my dreams had thought that coming to admit that I was an addict who needed the help of other addicts would be the key to

"I didn't
walk into N.A.
knowing how
to be a
good parent . . ."

holding my head up again. That white key chain means so much.

Well, it's two years and seven months later since that night and I'm still clean! That's a major miracle. Until I came into these rooms of N.A. the most clean time I ever put together between nineteen and forty years old was maybe thirty days. The hardest part for me is feeling the feelings that go with mothering my now almost nine and eleven year old boys. I didn't walk into N.A. knowing how to be a good parent anymore than I knew how to be a good friend or mate. Sharing in the N.A. rooms and with others through this magazine helps me know it's okay that I don't yet feel I have any answers—the only answers are the Just For Today following of our twenty four spiritual principles

with my Higher Power helping me through all of you and our literature.

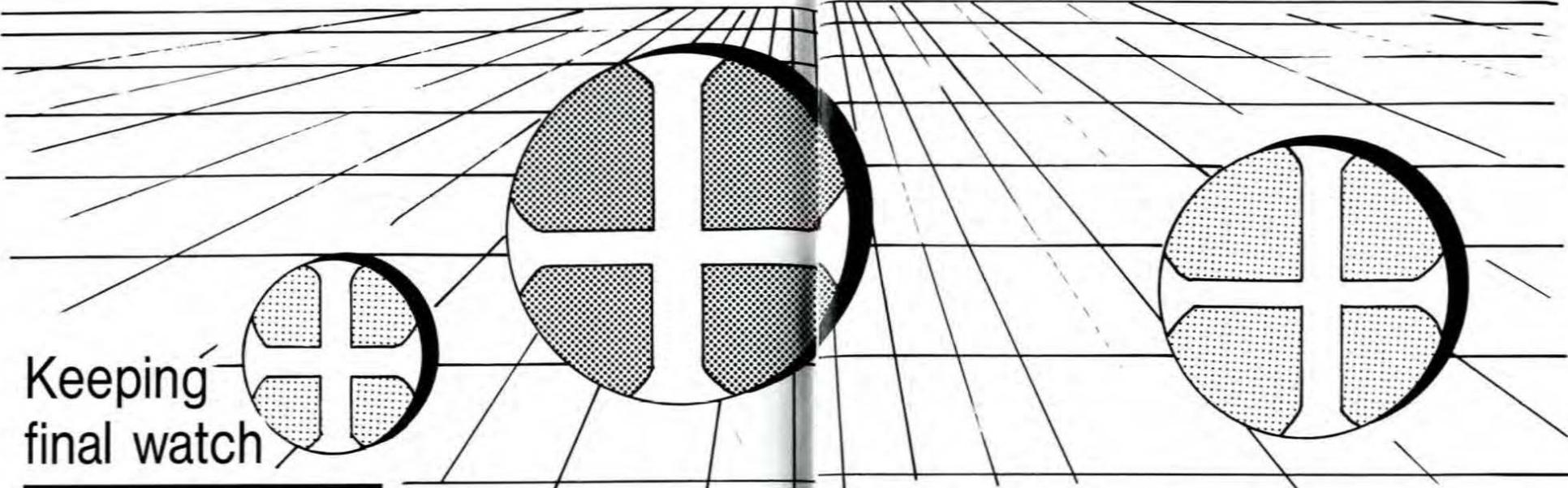
When my oldest son tells me I'm always "ruining his plans," it cuts me like a knife to my heart and it's very hard to feel my feelings and admit that I'm powerless over both him and my feelings too. But if I don't make that first admission I get crazy and react and yell and scream (which is what happened to me at his age). The rest of Step One is real obvious too—my life is unmanageable if I try to control what I cannot as my disease would have me do. Step Two gives me the faith to walk away when I don't know what to do and my disease is telling me to behave in the old insane patterns. Step Three—on my knees, on the phone with another recovering mom and to a meeting helps me follow God's will for me to grow just a little more humble and ready to let my Higher Power drive me sane instead of being part of the disease of addiction driving me more insane.

So, thanks to this program, before my son went back to his father last night I was able to treat him as I would (in recovery) treat anyone else who hurt my feelings and simply share my feelings without expecting to change anything about him. I also told him I love him just as much when he's yelling at me as when things are easy between us. Then the miracle that I did not expect happened—his sullenness lifted and he said, "I love you mom" and gave me a hug that felt like it came from deep in his heart too.

Thanks for sharing life and love with me.

Anonymous, Connecticut





Keeping final watch

A man I sponsored who had almost ten years clean in N.A. telephoned to let me know that he had been diagnosed as having cancer. He had been through some tests and doctors told him he needed an operation to prevent the cancer from spreading further.

I was devastated emotionally and began to experience fear, powerlessness and helplessness, but this addict needed my experience, strength and hope and, of course, the Higher Power's help. I suggested he needed to concentrate on Steps Two and Three and to really work on the spiritual part of the N.A. program because what was going to happen was out of our hands. I also made a personal decision, which I shared with him, to be more available to him day or night and telephone or visit much more frequently than before.

I usually pray for the people who I

sponsor on a daily basis, but I somehow found myself praying for the miracle that this addict's life would be spared and the cancer would go into remission.

After praying and meditation, some answers came. I could put him in touch with other recovering people who are long-term cancer survivors. Fortunately, we have in our area a physician who understands our disease well. He is an "Addictionologist," and, I think, a pioneer, teaching other doctors about the disease of addiction, the medical aspects of our disease and detoxification.

I called the physician and set up an appointment with the sponsee so that he could get the best advice about what prescription medication would work best if he needed to take it. There were some realities we needed to face. There can be great physical pain with cancer and the N.A.

program suggests that we need not suffer such physical pain in recovery. Please do not misunderstand this suggestion or opinion. I think medication is to alleviate pain, not to keep us loaded. There may be times when, after examining and trying other measures, the only alternative left is psycho-active medication or "pain-killers."

My sponsee and I discussed these alternatives at length. He said that he did not want to take anything no matter what. I encouraged him to keep an open mind because physical pain can be most uncomfortable and, if it is the only alternative, there are safeguards which can be set up between sponsors, recovering friends, family and medical personnel so that the recovering addict is not in control of the medication. Individually we would probably be the worst people to regulate or control our taking of any drug.

Eventually he was informed by his doctors that the cancer had spread to other parts of his body and that they would not operate. This was very sad news and meant that his condition was terminal. (I found out much later that he was given two months to live and he lived almost two years after this).

He went to a lot of meetings, continued to work the N.A. program and do the footwork. He was an inspiration to many of us who knew him. We saw a living example of the courage which the N.A. program gives us. He kept coming back until he was physically incapable of doing so.

During his final days there was much pain. At that point he made a decision to take the prescribed medication. I think he demonstrated courage in his belief and commitment to the principles of the N.A. program.

Ray P., East Bay

Recovery European style

My wife and I were talking with an addict in Israel. It always amazes me to share with someone on the phone like we are in a meeting, when in reality they are halfway around the world!

She told us she was having a hard time and was feeling isolated in her N.A. community. We talked about the Narcotics Anonymous Convention set for May in Paris and suggested she make an effort to go there to strengthen her recovery and her commitment to N.A. service. She told us to put our money where our mouths were and meet her there!

The idea of going to Paris to meet an N.A. member from Israel and share recovery in English and French was beyond our wildest dreams, so we said "okay, you're on!"

I called ahead and set up N.A. contacts in each city we were to visit, got two weeks off from work, and with God's grace and non-refundable tickets, we were off!

We stopped first in Germany and headed straight for the regular Thurs-

day night meeting in Frankfurt. The meeting was in German, of course, but they took a group conscience and decided to translate the whole meeting so we could feel a part of. That these members would freely choose to haltingly share their pain, stopping every other sentence to let another member translate, is a miracle to me. I wondered if my home group would be so willing.

On Friday we took a train to Paris. We arrived, dropped our bags at the hotel and headed off to the convention site. What a thrill to walk down the streets of Paris following N.A. signs in French to a Narcotics Anonymous convention.

The first time I was in Paris was four or five years ago and there were only two meetings a week and they were both in English. When we entered the civic center, tears came to my eyes as we saw a dozen or more French men and women at tables for registration, P.I. and merchandise. There are now over fourteen meetings a week in Paris and a strong core of N.A. members with substantial clean time. The meetings are filled with recovery from the disease of addiction the N.A. Way, some tears, some laughter and, most all, a lot of love.

We met the chairperson for the convention. He asked my wife if she would do a workshop on "More Will Be Revealed" (one of her favorite topics) and then I heard him say to me "I have some good news and some bad news...the good news is we want you to speak at the men's meeting, the bad news is it will be translated every few sentences." I had shared at the Frank-

furt meeting like that so I said "no problem."

The next morning we were up early and I was trying to think of many things to share. When we got back to the convention, I asked my friend "What time is that meeting you want me to share at?" He said: Oh, 8:30 tonight and then we will have a dance to follow. I thought to myself "isn't that strange. . . instead of a banquet meeting, they're going to have men's and women's meetings and then a dance?"

At 4:30 p.m. the daytime meetings ended and the chairperson took us all out to a Chinese restaurant for dinner. It was their after-meeting place. On the way there the chairperson turned to me and said "We have to get you back on time since you are the *main* speaker." I said, "Main speaker? I thought you said *men's* speaker!"

While we were eating dinner I thought to myself "I really don't have enough time to plan anything grandiose to say, thank God," and that if I didn't have a message to carry by now then it was too late anyway.

The meeting opened with sharing in French and being translated into English.

I started jotting down some notes on what I wanted to say. Since I was being translated after every few sentences, I was concerned that I would lose my train of thought and stare blankly at the group. I knew I wanted to share on each step, since that's what makes our recovery possible. I also wanted to share about early N.A. at home, since there were so many newly forming fellowships there,

in Belgium and in other parts of France. I made notes about our first newcomer and how she now has eight years clean in N.A., that there are now seven meetings a week in that town and what that means to me. I also wanted to talk about service and what that has done for me.

The meeting started: "My name is _____ and I'm an addict," and the translator said: "Mon nom est _____, je suis dependant. . ."

"They. . .
decided to
translate the
whole meeting,
so we could
be a part of. . ."

After the meeting, my heart soared like a dove as members came up to share with me in a halting English. I kept thinking "My gratitude speaks when I care and share with others the N.A. way."

Sunday morning one of the speakers was an old friend of mine. He was one of the most timid and shy persons I've known in recovery. To see him there some four years later, calmly sharing his experience, strength and hope to a room filled with over a hundred addicts was a miracle. At the end of the meeting we got in a circle and shared in another miracle. The serenity prayer was shared first in Hebrew by the Israelis, then in German, then in English and then in French. . . keep coming back. It works if you live it.

Anonymous., Virginia

I belong

Thanks to Narcotics Anonymous I know who I am and where I belong. Until I reached these rooms I never knew. I spent most of my life feeling like I didn't belong or wasn't wanted. When I reached Narcotics Anonymous I was spiritually, physically and mentally beaten. I had lost all hope. I felt as if the world was against me and that no one could possibly understand how I felt. Yet I had all the answers. I wouldn't take advice. Basically I was a perfect candidate for this program. I used anything I could

all of the time so I wouldn't have to feel or deal with reality.

Thank God my world finally collapsed around me and I was court-ordered to a recovery unit at the local psychiatric hospital. A member of the fellowship gave a step study there once a week. Finally I found someone who understood what it was like to need to use, but had also found a better way to live. I could tell from his story that he really knew how I felt. Soon after that I was allowed to attend meetings. I began to listen and then became interested in the steps. I was amazed at how many people felt like me and were staying clean.

Despite all evidence to the contrary, I was still sure that I couldn't be a part of this fellowship, learn how to stay clean and live a full and happy life. Good thing I was wrong. I stuck around long enough for the miracle to happen. Even today I find that I have a disease of alienation, isolation and



feeling separate than. My friends in N.A. taught me that this is my disease. My fear is an illusion creating the feeling of separateness. I am not alone. We are all interdependent parts of a whole. I need meetings to remind me of that. Also service work helped me to feel needed and to learn how to work with others.

I recently moved from another state. I was very involved with the fellowship there. I knew everyone in our area and had built some very strong friendships. I experienced all the fears I had as a newcomer, because I was a newcomer to this area. I suddenly had great deal of fear; where was my foundation? Thank God I knew what to do. I got involved, found a new home group and got phone numbers and struggled to use them. With my Higher Power's help I can walk through all my fears. N.A. may be different in every state but the message is still the same.

I hear my story over and over again in N.A. I am grateful that today I know that I am needed and loved. In these rooms, it took the spirit of unity and the common bond with recovering addicts to guide me to the solutions. I believe that the First Tradition says it the best, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity." The process of the steps, positive affirmations, and time are teaching me how to give and receive love. Today I have learned how to stay clean and live a full and happy life. Thanks to Narcotics Anonymous I know where I belong.

Lynda, CA.

An instant shared

The longer I'm here, the less I know. Six years in recovery does not exempt me from addiction. I need now more than ever to work the principles of our program, to correspond regularly with a sponsor, to correspond regularly with fellowship members and keep a regular contact with God as I understand him. I use the word regular because that's what some of our literature says.

I also still attend meetings regularly. I follow the basics of the program or else I'm in big time trouble. I am not an old-timer.

I suffered from a big ego when I reached five years clean. I could tell you how it should be. Sure I still reached out to newcomers, still do. And I could sound powerful and act like it too! In any event, God saw fit to change my attitude.

Our fellowship has taught me right and wrong. When I'm wrong I promptly admit it—unless it would cause harm or injure others. I ask my sponsor when in doubt or a fellow member. There's a difference between honesty and stupidity. I don't need to be that self-centered. As my sponsor

says, "the steps never end—they are repeated."

In any event I am not cured! I make mistakes and thank God . . . so long as they are new.

Recently in my personal recovery I have had to learn about honesty and stupidity. I am newly married and now have another's feelings to be concerned with. I will not justify wrong doings. I will work my steps to correct them. But in time. Marriage is new. It takes much time to develop a new relationship. Thank goodness God is patient with me.

I feel honored to be where I think God wants me today. We are in the process of starting a meeting in our area. We also are trying to get a meeting in the jail through our sub-committee. There's so much more.

More keeps being revealed to me each day. New situations arise and some old. But I've always had a solution through our fellowship. When I'm feeling a feeling I can't identify I write to all of you. I let you identify it for me and I let my God do his work.

I am finally getting a better understanding of Step Three. I am not in control. Step Eleven is confirming my belief. I have started to blossom a bit in the sunlight. Step Twelve is to truly get out of me and help another. I can try to really be myself because of Steps Six and Seven. I no longer need to walk in fear or cling to old behaviors. God, recovery is great! And ya know, I owe it to you for believing in me. Thanks!

N.E., New Jersey

Going where help is

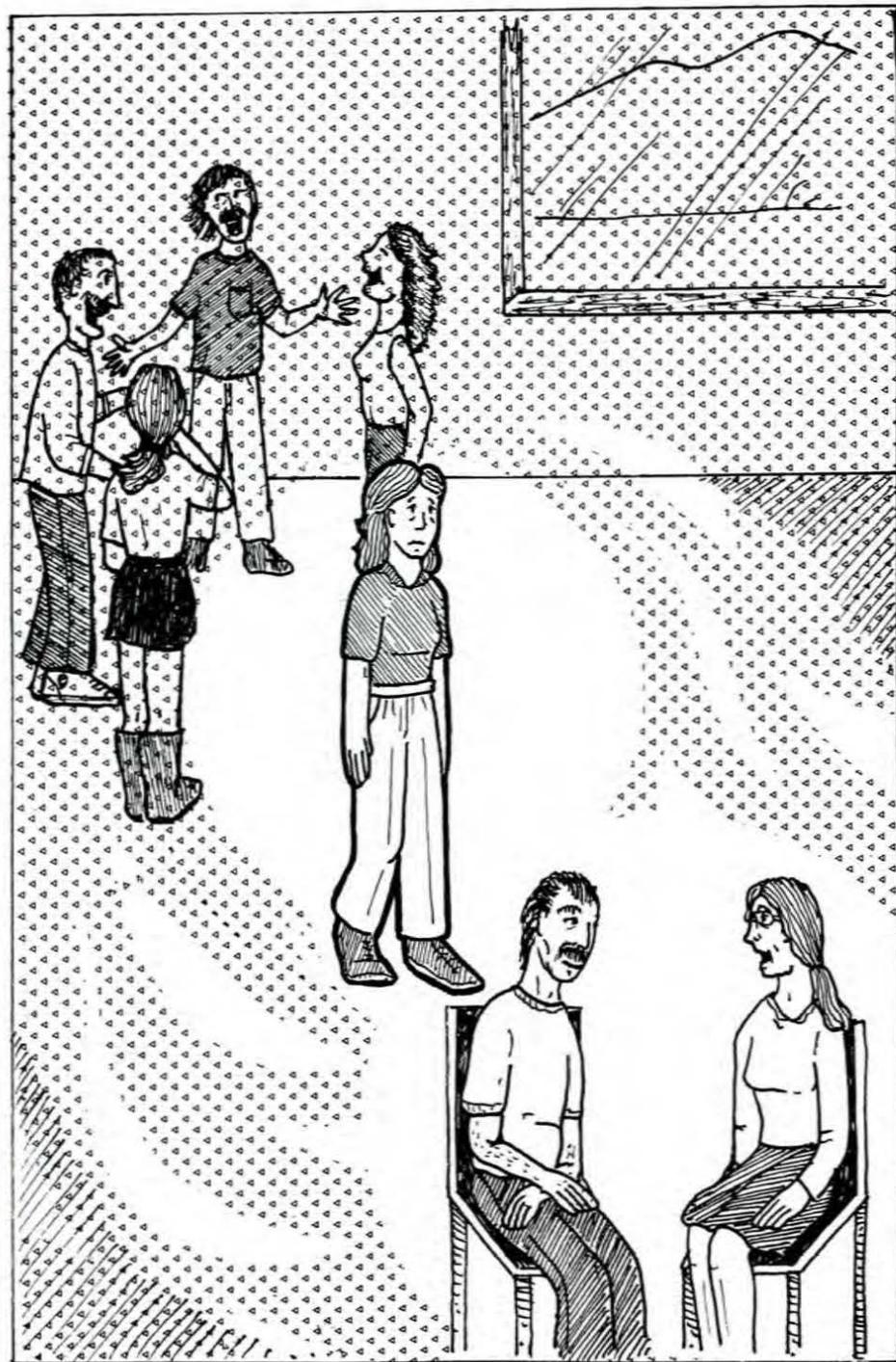
Recently I have experienced one of the most painful and devastating circumstances a human being can know—the death of a parent. I have heard in this program that my worst day clean is better than my best day using. I don't know about that. That day, by far, was the worst day of my life.

I had to travel over 2000 miles to meet with my brothers and sisters to settle our mother's affairs. Thank God there is N.A. in that area. I was able to attend meetings and share with other recovering addicts. Addicts even took my telephone number there and brought me to a meeting when I wanted to isolate.

At first, I was in shock and numb. I was wrapped up in the day to day business of settling affairs. Then it was time to go back home, to reality. The pain set in.

The fellowship in our area is relatively young and growing. I didn't feel the therapeutic value at meetings. I felt no one was hearing me—no one could relate. I felt deserted and abandoned. I just wanted someone to say something to take the pain away.

If I wanted to talk about getting a dent in my car or a "C" in my class I felt people would relate to that. But



when I talked of my mother's death and the feelings of despair and the urge to use over it, I felt silence coming back to me.

For several weeks I continued to attend my regular meetings and extra ones too, though I did not receive a lot of relief. What I did find was that I could count on my sponsor. I called her at all times, including 2 and 6 a.m., crying, laughing, yelling—I utilized her.

I made a decision to finish my Fourth Step that had lain there for over a month. I shared the fifth step with my sponsor.

I also had a few numbers of some addicts that lived out of town—some "old-timers" who I knew had experienced the death of a loved one. I used those numbers. I got some of the relief I needed. They told me that nothing an addict could say would take away the pain or fact of my mother's death. That it was time to switch my dependence from people and things to a loving God. That was hard to swallow, but through time I have come to see that they were right. I have to travel through the pain with God.

The feelings I experience as a result of the death of my mother are overwhelming. They are all the normal feelings I experience on any given day: happiness that she was no longer suffering, gratitude that she had a H.P. in her life and believed she was going to a better place, guilt, for all the pain I had caused her, for not being perfect, fear of being alone, relapse, anger that my mother died so young and resentment that some of the addict's I'd grown close to didn't

live up to my expectations. I felt love for her, I miss her so much— it was like a piece of me was ripped out. Normal emotions are blown way out of proportion by the devastation of losing this person who was so instrumental in such a huge part of my life and who I am. I am grateful that there were addicts who were willing and able to relate with me on these feelings. Its a rocky road.

I guess what I'm saying here is that I needed to ask for help, as painful as that was. I got wrapped up in how self-centered some of the addicts in our area seemed and refused to concentrate on those who did call and did attend the memorial service. That attitude could have killed me. I had to go where the help was, even though it hurt me deeply that my friends seemed so insensitive. I had to ask my sponsees to help and support me in any way they could, even if it was letting up on their demands for a short while. I have to get with these steps and work them to the best of my ability, I have to trust that God has a plan for me and all I have to do is find out what it is and follow it.

I'm so grateful for a loving God in my life today. I cannot be at a meeting twenty-four hours a day or on the phone with my sponsor. I can count on God always to help me through the rough spots and even the typhoons of life.

With the continued help of a loving God and Narcotics Anonymous, which made God a possibility for me, I'll stay clean just for today, learn how to live and continue to recover in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of N.A.

K.J.W., Michigan

Home Group

Slugg's vision



Sowing the seed in Lithuania

An addict who is currently living in the Northeastern United States visited the struggling Republic of Lithuania early this year and made many new N.A. contacts.



The 1987 World Service Conference of Narcotics Anonymous seemed like Pandemonium to me. I had never seen so many "service junkies" in one place and at first I was awed. I had been elected alternate RSR for the Utah Region just two months earlier. During this mayhem of information gathering I discussed my interest in carrying the N.A. message of recovery to the Soviet Union and, especially, to Lithuania, which is the home of my forefathers. I made a decision to accomplish this goal. Having visualized the end and put the cart before the horse, so to speak, I left the means to the end in God's hands and continued on the path before me.

I think Lithuania has been like a giant prison under Russian rule. With this idea in mind I interpreted my effort as a WSC H&I project and I promised the H&I chairperson I would send her a report.

The opportunity to travel to Lithuania came last January when I was asked to be one of five chaperones for a group of New Hampshire high school students who were traveling there as part of an exchange program. The group was scheduled to leave the United States February 23d, which didn't leave much time to make inquiries about the predicament of addicts in Lithuania. Much of that time was spent writing letters to U.S. Senators and officials with the Lithuanian diplomatic contingent in Washington, D.C. I also called the U.S. Department of State and informed officials of the dual

purpose of my upcoming trip. Through this process of communications with official and unofficial sources I came across the names of four doctors who were treating recovering addicts in Lithuania. I sent identical letters to these doctors, who are, interestingly enough, called "Narcologists," and asked them if they could arrange a meeting for me with some of their addict-clients. I also let them know I was interested in putting on an N.A. presentation in one of their prisons. Along with these letters I sent a package of informational pamphlets. In the letters I outlined my own active addiction and years in recovery.

The response I received from official sources in the United States was minimal. It boiled down to acknowledgement of my efforts to apprise officialdom of my upcoming trip and some pats on the back for my enthusiasm.

The World Service Office was much more helpful. On the last day, four hours before leaving, I received an overnight express package containing a letter from WSO Executive Director Bob Stone expressing some of his concerns, a draft translation into Lithuanian of some of our literature, a list of N.A. meetings in Helsinki, Finland, where I planned to spend some time, and a long letter from someone in Russia seeking information and advice about recovery and relating especially harsh treatment addicts experience in Russia.

I stopped in New York and picked up packages from my sister, mother and father to take to our oversea relatives. My roommate had given me twenty dollars to buy ballpoint pens and gum to give to passersby in Lithuania. I filled my suitcase with aspirin, gum candy, cold capsules, pens, coffee razor blades and shavers and other items which we take for granted in the United States but which they have a hard time buying in Lithuania. There was a bit of room left over for clothes and I jammed them in.

We arrived in Helsinki on the morning of February 24th, after leaving Boston on the afternoon of the 23rd. In Helsinki we exchanged some U.S. currency into Finmarks and a few hours later boarded a Russian train bound for Leningrad.

Saturday, February 24

We're on a train about 50 miles into the Finnish countryside outside of Helsinki. Its 2:20 p.m. and I'm sitting in a compartment with three escorts for twenty American high school students bound for Lithuania. The window is ice-frosted and fogged up and the afternoon is gray. The others just woke up and we're talking about the similarities between Finland and the Canadian Northwest Territories.

We're traveling through farm country and all around us are dirt roads, virgin hemlocks and farm houses. I was feeling guilty about eating this large bar of chocolate be-

cause I think I *should* have saved it for the Lithuanians. Now that I've finished it all the guilt feelings have disappeared.

We cleared Russian customs and then stopped at a railroad station where I got off the train to exchange dollars into rubles. I walked downstairs and was immediately surrounded by a group of young Russian men who tried to do a black market deal with me. They offered me four hundred rubles for one hundred Finnish Marks, which is double the official exchange rate. I wouldn't go for it, even though the offer was tempting. Next a man sidled up to me and tried to sell two Russian medals. He smelled of vodka. I would have liked to help him, but didn't want to become embroiled in a situation with all kinds of officials looking on.

Sunday, February 25

On a plane heading for Vilnius, Lietuva (Lithuania). We stayed at the Hotel Rossia in Leningrad Saturday night. After supper I stuck around in the hotel restaurant and invited two Russian men and a woman to sit with me and a friend. I gave the girl a vial of perfume and cigarettes to the men. It was tough to communicate with them, but it was also fun. We exchanged addresses and promises to write.

Today we took a tour of Leningrad. We saw many old and stately buildings and monuments from the past. The modern buildings seem to have

no character, standing shabbily along the gray streets. All the people I met were very friendly and I passed out gum, cigarettes and money to many of them. Almost everyone wants to exchange rubles for dollars and they are offering about twice the official rate. One gets the feeling here that almost everything is done "under the table." They "deal" for money, food and cigarettes. I could fit right into this kind of atmosphere, because its how I used to live when I was using drugs.

The students we are chaperoning had fun dealing with the marketeers. One bought a T-shirt for \$5, which is about 30 rubles. It has "Hard Rock Cafe" in Russian imprinted on it.

The plane is crowded. I am sitting beside a beautiful young woman from Vilnius and we've just started a conversation.

Monday, February 26 1:20 a.m.

Lying in bed after a wonderful evening of excitement, talk, Lithuanian food and family companionship. They made me feel at home and the center of attention. I don't remember all their names but it doesn't matter. Alive, full of energy and hope for the future, they greeted me with bouquets of flowers, love and laughter. I felt like a long lost son coming home. That's it. Coming home. Of course, they wanted to know all about my life and I didn't

pull any punches.

All the coffee I drank tonight is keeping me awake. Its now after four in the morning and I haven't been able to fall asleep. Part of it is just being here. I'm keyed up! I think that if the Russians allowed me to stay to carry the message I would give up my life in the U.S.

Later on this morning I am going to call one of the doctors I wrote to from the United States and see if we can get together for a few hours. He met me at the airport, along with the family, and said he has set up a speaking engagement for me on Tuesday afternoon at 5 p.m. He's invited a large number of people and the media, which brings up all kinds of red flags for me. I'll have to remind him about anonymity and my need to keep a low profile with the press. It was quite a surprise to hear about his plans for me, in fact, it was a shock.

Friday, March 2 3 a.m.

Just notes. I am bushed. Monday morning I had three hours of meetings with the staff and patients of a substance abuse treatment center. This was our first H&I N.A. meeting. About 30 patients came and we had a meeting which lasted an hour and a half. I told my story and answered questions, followed by a discussion. I also met with the doctors in their office. They asked about treatment in the U.S., and I told them about the N.A. program. This

meeting also went well and then I went back for another forty-five minutes of discussion with the patients. There was a lot of enthusiasm.

Later I met with my cousin's husband and we hiked and drove all over Vilnius visiting churches and other historical landmarks. We came home about 9 p.m. and stayed up for a few more hours talking and drinking tea with the rest of the family.

At 5 p.m. Tuesday I met with about 75 addicts who had come from all over Lithuania to hear about Narcotics Anonymous. I read the Lithuanian language translation of the White Book and I.P. No. 7 and then answered questions. About an hour later we held our first regular Narcotics Anonymous meeting and laid plans to have another one Thursday evening.

Wednesday morning a doctor picked me up at home and took me to the city prison in Vilnius. There I met with a group of 15 admitted addict inmates, two psychiatrists and several other staff people, including the warden. I spoke for about 30 minutes and answered questions about the Narcotics Anonymous program. Most of the questions came from the addicts.

After the meeting the warden invited his staff members, the doctor and I up to his office where he served coffee and sweets. When we'd finished our coffee a bottle was produced and there was genuine shock when I declined the whiskey.

I gently explained that I wasn't "cured" and described the disease of addiction.

On Thursday, March 1st, my cousin's husband and I visited more of the city's landmarks and did some shopping. I picked up some artwork and amber necklaces. Wherever we went I passed out ballpoint pens and gum to people saying "This is from your friends in America." They seemed to love it and when they found I was an American able to speak their language they opened up to me with their fears, hopes and dreams.

We held a regular N.A. meeting Thursday evening and afterwards had a business meeting. Group committee people volunteered and were elected. Two of the members gave me a ride home and told me the meeting would still be there the next time I came back to Lithuania.

Friday, March 9

My relatives sent us off Wednesday evening with much heartfelt love and laughter. The ties have been made and my world is now larger. I feel these were not chance meetings and that much will come of this visit. I wonder if I will be coming back with a group of addicts to carry the N.A. message of recovery from addiction. I sense that I will.

Yesterday we were met by two Russian girls at the Leningrad Railroad Station. They are friends of friends who made arrangements for

the encounter. We took a cab to their apartment to clean up and then they took us to a Russian ballet showing of Don Quixote. After the show we went walking through Leningrad and ate in a restaurant. As usual, the waiter wanted to buy dollars but we didn't deal with him. The food wasn't very good and was overpriced.

We just passed a Russian immigration and customs checkpoint and some of our belongings were inspected. We were cleared and are proceeding into Finland. Their customs people are now coming aboard and are walking through the car.

The days are full again since I have taken on much work, and the time is right for change to a different outlook at my parent's country. There is much work to be done to help Lithuania and Lithuanians... more will be revealed...



The broad perspective

Conference money woes

In early August the N.A. WSC Admin Committee urged the postponement of standing committee activity as a response to a failure of fund-flow to support the 1990 budget. A memo detailing the budget crunch lists four projects the Admin Committee sees as priority recipients of available funds. Those are: the Steps Ad Hoc; the Traditions Ad Hoc; the Guide to Service Ad Hoc; and the Ad Hoc Committee on Isolated Groups.

The Steps and Traditions committees are involved in the assimilation of information and the production of the publication *It Works, How and Why*; *The Guide to Service* is a long-term project for the production of a book about the service structure of N.A.; and the Ad Hoc on Isolated Groups is working to identify the existence and needs of groups that are, for whatever reason, cut off from participation with the mainstream fellowship.

The Admin Committee memo stopped short of declaring committee activity will not be funded, but does contain the statement "The Admin Committee has asked the WSO staff to contact us regarding any requests for arrangements that incur an expense. We will review each request and make decisions based on priorities and the financial situation at the time of the request."

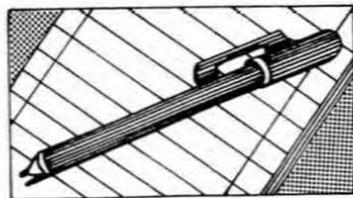
At the 1990 WSC representatives approved a \$424,000 annual package, but are now passing on only a fraction of the monthly average needed to meet that budget.

Fiscal inhibition of committee activity will likely result in the necessity that the October WSC workshop in Van Nuys, Ca., be more devoted to individual committee agenda and less to the relaxed type of fellowship interaction of the Arlington, Virginia, workshop in Mid-July.

During the Arlington workshop most world level board and committee members participated with other members of the fellowship in a series of open forums on such things as N.A.'s image, finances, literature, and international development, in addition to regular committee meetings.

A Joint Administrative Committee meeting set for September 15 will have uppermost on its agenda the description of planned committee projects for the coming year. A spokesperson for the JAC said "Ideas generated there will be presented in October when the JAC meets with the (WSO) board of directors in hopes of presenting a unified budget suggestion to the 1991 conference"

Viewpoint



Likes magazine

I wish to respond to the Viewpoint article in the *N.A. Way*, July 1990 issue. The topic of the article was the boring uniformity of the articles and artwork, which the writer indicated: "Contributed to the boring, naive overall image" and that "the proportions and perspectives don't fit."

I beg to differ! First of all I feel that the articles contain a great deal of realism and individuality, and there's nothing boring about them in the least! As a matter of fact, I have found them to be quite interesting and they have been helpful to me as I trudge this road of recovery.

Sure there's a great deal of similarity in the articles, but that similarity is the message of recovery—and rightfully so! If the writers of these articles are working their program and incorporating the steps and traditions in their daily lives, then their message should sound similar and familiar to anyone, anywhere around the world; since we are all working and striving to live by the same

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Secondly, I find the artwork to be refreshing and well done, and in my opinion it definitely correlates with the articles. Also, the artwork gives the reader some insight and a visual perspective as to what the writer is feeling and trying to relay.

I have been reading the *N.A. Way* magazine for about nine months now and I anxiously await the arrival of each new issue. In closing, all I'd like to say is: Keep up the good work, *N.A. Way!*

V.C., California

Moved by "On prejudice"

Hi. The reason I am writing this letter is because of the gush of emotions that shot through me after reading the article written by J.H. titled "On Prejudice" that was printed in the July 1990 *N.A. Way*.

It hurt me tremendously to read about the experience "J.D." had with other members of his home group. Personally I think it stinks. Thanks J.H. for writing about this experience as it did make a difference when I read it.

Each one of us is extremely sensitive and I'm sure if I went through an experience like "J.D." did I would feel utterly hopeless. Some members can get over it, others will hope it gets better, but still others will feel that *N.A.* does lay down conditions or "requirements" for membership.

I'm sorry if this letter seems too blunt but it's meant to be. I think each one of us in recovery needs to stop and ask ourselves, "What are the requirements for membership and am I prejudiced?"

In Fellowship

S.N., Bombay, India

Caution urged

I'm writing this letter in response to an article I read in Vol. 8, No. 6, June 1990 *N.A. Way*. In this article a person refers to his friend being diagnosed as manic-depressive and needing to take Lithium to stabilize his mood. I happen to be an addict, a physician and diagnosed as "cytothymic," which means that I am prone to rapid mood swings a bit more accentuated than the normal person. I would like to express my feelings on the use of doctor-prescribed medication.

An addict has been defined as a person who uses a drug and continues to use it despite the occurrence of unpleasant side effects and unpleasant consequences either social or physical. Some medications are used to stabilize a person's mood but are not addictive in the sense that they do not

produce any kind of mood alterations; on the contrary they help a person to not get so depressed that they want to kill themselves, and not get so high that they become incoherent and unintelligible. They are life saving drugs. They definitely have a place in the life of some addicts. I believe drug addiction needs to be distinguished from prescribed medication which needs to be taken to preserve the quality of a person's life the very same way a diabetic must take his medication. Otherwise he'll die. He is not addicted to the insulin because of a physical or psychological craving, his body is unable to produce insulin and hence he has to inject himself with it every day. So please fellow addicts, do not stop any medically prescribed medications without first consulting your doctor. Some of them are life-saving.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to share. I am a very grateful recovering addict who has to stay on prescribed medication for a while.

C., Trinidad

Missing Twelfth Step opportunity

I want to share something that I think I'd forgot, and am beginning to remember again. In our area we've got a lot of treatment now. And in my life something has slowly started changing about the 12th Step.

I used to take off with somebody and go see somebody else who was sick at their house. I've had people live at my house, live on my sofa, you know, do a lot of things, but slowly that started changing and it was kind of an insidious thing. I didn't even realize it was happening. It was just kind of gone one day and every once in while I start feeling this empty thing.

I guess about six months ago we got a call and went over to the hospital to see a guy in there. They had him in intensive care and they said "I think this guy's got a problem, maybe you guys can help him" and we walked in cold and talked to somebody that had never heard of Narcotics Anonymous before, and man, that's something!

I talk to a lot of people who go through treatment and they know as much about the steps as I do. You know, they've learned a lot. They really do, and I guess that's good, not bad, but I suddenly realized "What am I missing here?" Cause to stand there and share those real profound things like "We just don't use, one day at a time" and see somebody respond. . . they go "Yeah, really!" And say "Damn, nobody ever told me that!" There's a *real something* in that and I realize that's something that's been missing and I think a lot of the newer people have missed that or are missing it.

We checked back and the guy at the hospital had split. This guy was sick, I mean sick, he really got you back in touch with it. The only reason he was still there was because they wouldn't give him his clothes, and uh, I think

he left anyhow. And that's active addiction, you know, that's active addiction.

I share a lot, and we talk about it, that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel, and I agree, but the therapeutic value is more to me than anybody I'm sharing with. It falls into that strange thing that you got to give it away to keep it.

N.B., South Carolina

"Stop fighting"

I am writing this article in a storm of anger and frustration. Sadly, these feelings are affected by other members of this fellowship. I guess that negative feelings towards other members inevitably happen from time to time with me. Thank God that for the most part, my relationships with other members are based in positive growth and enrichment of my personal recovery.

Over the past two years I have witnessed an increase—for lack of better words—in "attacks" on our world service efforts by a small minority of members in this fellowship. Having been involved in world services for a few years, I have been able to personally witness some of these "attacks."

At the most recent W.S.C., I saw a small group of folks (I estimate less than 10% of the conference participants) take several hours of the conference time in order to attack var-

ious world service activities. This small minority took so much time and energy from the conference that much of the business at hand was barely addressed. The overwhelming majority of the conference participants denounced the actions of this group of individuals. Even so—these folks continued to stalk around the hallways and meeting rooms of the hotel bitterly and angrily condemning just about everything that was taking place at the conference. I believe that the minority should have a voice at the conference but to disrupt and delay the conference work schedule is totally inappropriate in my book.

It has been a few months since the W.S.C. and the actions of these individuals continue. On almost a weekly basis I hear about the "controversy of the week." Most recently I witnessed the circulation of an unapproved version of the Basic Text being sold in the local fellowship. I see these actions as hateful and resentful. I believe these actions undermine our service efforts on the world level and that these actions are subversive to the unity of this fellowship.

Two facts about this whole thing particularly sadden me. First—several of the participants in these actions are actually some of the "old timers" of this fellowship. Second—these individuals tend to take advantage of the uninformed and newcomer in the fellowship by inciting them with the "important" issues and convincing folks that "this is really what's happening." I know that early in my recovery I was easily influenced by older members that I "looked up to." I think it's a real

shame these individuals use their time and experience as "status" in order to coerce members into believing what is being passed off as the truth.

In my first years of recovery I was very busy trying to fill the void inside of me that was left after I got clean and removed the drugs. For the most part I filled that void by working the program of recovery in N.A. There are many negative things I can fill that void with also and one of these is resentment. This is what I see happening with the individuals involved in the actions described in this letter. I view this as a terrible disservice to our members and especially the newcomer. For this reason I hope and pray that these people look at what they are doing.

E.A., Alabama

Against cover text

I've never written to the *N.A. Way Magazine* before although I've been a member of the fellowship for a little over four years. I've always let someone else express my opinion, knowing things would work out for the best in the end without any interference on my part. But the "What is Narcotics Anonymous" on the cover has been bothering me since I first noticed it on the May issue. At first I assumed the change that the "only require-

ment for membership is a desire to stop using drugs" was a typo or some other "glitch" that would be spotted and corrected. But it appears to me now that the change was intentional. This really disturbs me.

I know in my own mind what N.A. is and I don't rely on the back cover to explain it to me; but what about the newcomer? Does HE know what it is? If the requirement for membership is a desire to STOP using drugs, doesn't that infer that all the members are STILL using but WANT to stop?

I was under the impression that we had a process by which the language of our literature could be changed, if need be, and it was important to use only "Conference Approved" literature. Evidently those processes and concepts don't apply if you have a printing press. Don't you think it might be a good idea to allow the conference to change the wording if you want it changed, rather than just "self-willing" the whole thing?

Thank you for your time. "My gratitude speaks when I care and when I share the N.A. Way." What is the N.A. Way!?

R.T., Illinois

On women's meetings

I was born female and an addict. There hasn't been any recent information lately that has come my way to

confirm that people are born addicts. Therefore, I must address my special needs somewhere. I prefer an N.A. women's meeting that's foundation is based on recovery over a psychiatrist who doesn't understand addiction or a counselor who hasn't been where I've been.

An addict attending a special interest group does not affect N.A. as a whole, it only seems to affect certain people.

The addicts opposing the special interests groups, however, do affect N.A. as a whole, because they cause disunity among the fellowship and our common welfare then becomes something warped.

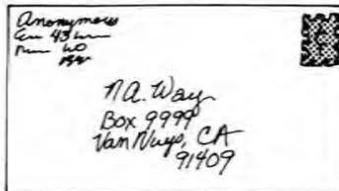
For almost five years I have been listening to the different arguments and conflicts concerning "special interest" groups. I have to say, in my opinion, it is definitely personalities before principles just about every time. The same type of addict always has to get in on the "cause," even when it doesn't effect them.

I have felt the way I feel ever since I went through treatment. Although I am frequently annoyed at the *Viewpoint* articles I have never gotten around to writing. I usually just read it, think about both sides, and maintain my same feeling. What is one more opinion? Everyone in N.A. has one!

I just felt the need to ask "R.U" and "Anonymous," who followed R.U. in the May 1989 issue, where are their own feelings? They did a great job copying the traditions from the book and quoting what their interpretation of those traditions are.

B.H., Maryland

From our readers



From inside addicts

On behalf of the inmates in the N.A. program in Dorchester Penitentiary in New Brunswick, I am writing in response to an article in the February 1990 issue of the *N.A. Way Magazine* on page 24 titled, "Are they really N.A. meetings?"

After reading your article I'm very sorry to say that our group has received the bad end of the stick in regards to N.A. support from outside members.

I am a recovering addict who is the chairperson of our group here in a Canadian prison. I have been in the N.A. program here since 1988, and very seldom do we get a visitor from outside to come to our meetings. Maybe once every three to five months. We don't get any support at all, we don't know what the heck is going on with regards to N.A. on the outside.

Several inmates in our group had written for a group T.A. to attend outside meetings. We were turned down flat. We do not have the support we need from the community that we feel we should be receiving. We don't have any addresses to the various groups in the province. We are sinking fast. This letter to you now is our only hope of reaching out to recovering addicts for support at a hard time like this. We need N.A. here! We need each

other. If you know of any people we can contact, please don't hesitate to contact the group here. Anyone wishing to write letters of support to our group, we would be more than grateful to correspond with them.

We are reaching out for help. Please help us. Thank you.

(Ed. note: Correspondence for the Dorchester inmates may be sent care of the WSO H&I Coordinator, Box 9999, Van Nuys, Ca 91409)

Musicians Meet In Paris

I am twenty two years old and have nine months in recovery. I have been blessed with the gifts of recovery, fellow addicts, service and being able to appreciate and play music.

During my active days I played my drums all the time, especially when I was high! Some days I played really great and other times not so good. After nine years of playing alone and with one or two friends I was finally asked to play in a band, but we were all addicts and we soon broke up. The shock helped add to my life long bottom. I was suicidal, paranoid and scared to death. Thank God for N.A. and my Higher Power who helped me get to the rooms.

When I came in you all welcomed me with open arms and ears and

shoulders to cry on, as well as close friends and a wonderful sponsor. Every time I looked around I saw something that I wanted. First the keychains. Then a commitment. Then to share and on and on. Each time I thought to myself, wow, wouldn't it be something if I got to do that! Well so far I have got it all and even got one of the biggest gifts, to play music with fellow addicts from around the world at my first convention.

It was during the Paris convention back in May. Right when I arrived they were getting ready for the talent show rehearsals and the next thing I knew I was playing drums for the show.

We had a blast and played songs from different countries and at the end did an all-star jam on a french song with the words changed to recovery words. Everyone in the theater was up dancing, laughing, singing and hugging. I pray that we will all be there next year to do it again.

Even more important was the love and unity I found that whole weekend. I was never alone. The power of love and recovery is everywhere, especially from the sixteen countries that were represented there. The messages, love and want for recovery and serenity shone brightly. Because without love in a dream it'll never come true.

Peace and Love,

H.O., New York

"But I'm Clean"

Hi. I'm an addict. I've been clean close to four years. In my recovery many things have happened. I came

to the rooms spiritually bankrupt, mentally overloaded and physically not too good either and I didn't even know it. I put on a facade of toughness and total independence—my walls. When I hurt enough I gave in. I don't mean that negatively. I mean, in a sense, I surrendered to suggestions of N.A. Since that time I have met new friends—real friends. I have experienced joy, pain, confusion, serenity and growth. Through the grace of my Higher Power I have not had to pick up for the longest period of time in my life. At times it seemed I had to step backward in order to continue forward. In the past year I have experienced again those steps. For some reason this time seemed more intense.

I guess the main reason I write this is because I had an experience in recovery that I didn't think could happen. I kept saying, "this couldn't be happening—I'm clean!" I couldn't see I needed help, though others around me could see the silent cries and pushed me to see them. I guess what it basically tells me is that if I stop reaching out and using the tools my Higher Power and the program give me then I will wilt away and die.

Today I look at all this as a growing period because as the saying goes, "no pain, no gain," or, "through pain you grow." And, I believe that to be true, though it was harder to keep believing as the pain grew deeper. And, I couldn't even see it happening. After a while, depression consumed me. I thought what I was feeling or thinking wasn't important enough; it wasn't "critical" enough. My fears, insecurities and lack of trust again

stopped me from reaching out. I had a new sponsor and reaching out to her seemed excruciating. My sense of self and any joy started to quickly diminish along with my will to live. It was exhausting to get up or to even talk or be with people. I needed help but was asking through my actions—my old ways of self-destruction. I forgot how to ask . . . it had been so long and a lot of me didn't even think it was worth it. I ended up seeking professional help. For me, it was what I needed to do. It was the best thing I could have done because at the time using didn't seem so much an option as suicide did.

I've been out of the hospital a few months and I thank God N.A. was there when I left, especially my sponsor and close friends. I have become more active with my sponsor, reaching out, getting involved and getting on my knees. For the first time, I did a written first step with my new sponsor. It felt good. I plan to stay there until I can gain some peace with surrendering and accepting. I can use the other steps daily, but my first priority is Step One. Without it I'll go nowhere.

Some of the things that were suggested to me and that have helped out are to first remember: Don't pick up, get on my knees and ask for help and direction and remember that I have the steps as an alternative to my old way of life. Work with a sponsor, attend meetings, continue counseling, write a daily journal and for me, communicating to someone how I feel seems indispensable to my recovery. With all this, which really can stay simple, I have a great advantage at

learning how to live. Thank you N.A. for being here! And remember—no matter how—this disease can kill. I need to stay on top of that.

K.T., Maine

Equation for Change

Having often wondered why I was the same after being clean a good while I got hungry for what my sponsor had. When I was ready the instructions appeared. For me those instructions are the steps, written so clearly and simply. I've always been changing, but with the steps I can change toward living with spiritual principles, which is what I saw in my sponsor. Today change can be slow, but beautiful. Recovery is for me! And if I want recovery and not just abstinence, I know where to go. The steps.

M.M., Florida

Free to be

Today! I am a very grateful recovering addict even though I am incarcerated due to my disease of addiction.

Every month I look forward to my *N.A. Way Magazine*. I love it!

I finally accepted the fact that, "my way doesn't work!"

Thanks to this simple program of Narcotics Anonymous.

Although I am incarcerated in my recovery it makes no difference because:

If you can't be where you want to be it's merely an inconvenience, but if you can't be who you are then you're in prison.

Thanks for helping me be myself.

E.P., Pennsylvania

Comin' up



LET US KNOW!

We'll be happy to announce your up-coming events. Just let us know at least three months in advance. Include dates, event name and location, N.A. office or phonenumber, and a post office box. (Sorry, but we can't print personal phone numbers or addresses.)

The **N.A. Way**
MAGAZINE

P.O. Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409.
(818) 780-3951.

ALABAMA: Oct 12-14, 1990; Surrender in the Mountains; Mt. Cheaha State Park, central Alabama. Rsvns P.O. box 18031, Huntsville, AL 35804-8031

AUSTRALIA: Sep. 28-30, 1990; Sydney Combined Areas Convention; Enmore Theatre, 116 Enmore Road, Enmore; tel. 61-202112445; CAC-90, P.O. Box 1376, Darlinghurst, NSW, Australia

BRITISH COLUMBIA: Oct. 26-28, 1990; 13 Annual Pacific Northwest Convention; Delta River Inn, 3500 Cessna Drive, Richmond, BC, V7B 1C7; rsvns.s (604) 278-1241; PNWCNA -13, P.O. Box 43018, Burnaby, BC, CANADA, V5G 4S2

CALIFORNIA: Nov. 2-4, 1990; 11th So. Cal. Regional Convention; Bonaventure Hotel, 404 S. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles; rsvns.s (213) 624-1000

CANADA: Oct. 5-7, 1990; "Chaque jour nous en revelera davantage" 3rd Quebec Regional Convention; Grand Hotel, in downtown Montreal, next to Square Victoria, metro station; C.R.Q.N.A.3, Station B, P.O. Box 1871, Quebec CANADA, H3B 3L4

COLORADO: Oct. 26-28, 1990; "Clean is free," 4th Colorado Regional Convention; Holiday Inn, 425 West Prospect Road, Ft. Collins CO 80526; rsvns.s (303) 482-2626; Colorado Reg. Convention, P.O. Box 5183, Englewood, CO 80155-5183

IRELAND: Nov. 9-11, 1990; "New Frontiers," Sixth Irish Convention of N.A.; Actons Hotel, Kinsale, County Cork; Registration for convention to IRCNA, P.O. Box 1368, Sherriff Street, Dublin 1, Ireland. Call Actons Hotel at (021) 772135.

MAINE: Sep. 22, noon to 5 p.m., International Area, N.A., H&I and P.I. Learning Day; Penobscot Comm. Med. Bldg., Bangor, Maine. Call (207) 234- 2713 for info

MINNESOTA: Sep. 22, 1990; Twin Cities Banquet, St Albert's Church, 2833 32d Av., Minneapolis, Mn. Rsvns. via T.C.N.A. Banquet Committee, P.O. Box 18354, W. St. Paul, Mn. 55118

NEBRASKA: Sept. 14-16, 1990; Holiday Inn, North Platte, NE 69101; NCRNA VII, P.O. Box 2254, North Platt, NE 69101

NEW ZEALAND: Oct. 26-28, 1990; New Zealand Regional Convention; Victoria University, Kelburn, Wellington; NZRSCCC, P.O. Box 12-473, Molesworth Street, Wellington,

OHIO: Sep. 14-15, 1990; "Literature Awareness 1990," Ramada Inn East, 2100 Brice Rd., Columbus, Ohio. Rsvns. (614) 864-1280. Ohio RSO, (614) 236-8787

2) Sep. 21-23, 1990; COASCNA H&I Learning Day campout at Camp Oty'Okwa, 55 miles southeast of Columbus, Ohio. \$30 registration. Write c/o Learning Day Campout, 1706 E. Broad St. Room 5, Columbus, OH. 43203

OREGON: Oct. 13-14, 1990; "Heartbeat of N.A." Rsvns (503) 341-6070

PENNSYLVANIA: Sep. 7-9, 1990; 9th Little Apple Area Birthday Celebration; George Washington Motor Lodge, Rt. 22 and 145, Allentown, PA; L.A.A. Sub. Comm., P.O. Box 4475, Allentown, PA 18105

2) Nov. 9-11, 1990; Start To Live VIII, Tri-State Regional Convention, Hilton Hotel Downtown Pittsburgh. Rsvns call (412) 391-4600 or 1-800-HILTONS. Phone-line (412) 381-8110. Send speaker tapes (5 years clean) to Tri-State RSO, Inc., P.O. Box 110217, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15232.

3) Nov. 23-25, 1990; Beehive Area Thanksgiving Convention; Sheraton Crossgates Hotel; rsvns. (717) 824-7100; phonenumber (717) 283-0828; send speaker tapes; Beehive ASC, P.O. Box 291, Wilkes Barre, PA 18703

4) Nov. 23-25, 1990; "Spiritual Foundation" Mini Convention, Philadelphia Inner City ASC; Holiday Inn, 18th and Market Streets, Philly. Info at box 7333, Philadelphia 19101 and registration through P.O. Box 2342, Philadelphia 19103

SOUTH CAROLINA: Nov. 15-18, 1990; Serenity Festival VIII, Landmark Hotel, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Write P.O.Box 1198, Myrtle Beach, S. C., 29577 for info or to pre-register

TENNESSEE: Nov. 21-25, 1990; 8th Volunteer Regional Convention; Hyatt Regency Hotel, 623 Union Street, Nashville, TN 37219; rsvns.s 1 (800) 233-1234; VRC VIII, P.O. Box 121961, Nashville, TN 37212

UNITED KINGDOM: Sept. 7-9, 1990; UKCNA IV at the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, Union Buildings, King's Walk, NE1 8QB; UKCNA 4, P.O. Box 704, London, England, SW10 ORP

VANCOUVER, BC: Oct. 26-28, 1990; "I can't; We can" 13th Annual Pacific Northwest Convention; Delta River Inn, 3500 Cessna Drive, Richmond, British Columbia, Canada. Hotel registration at (604) 278-1241. Convention registration write: PNWCNA -13, P.O. Box 43018, 4739 Willingdon Av., Burnaby, BC. V5G 4S2

VERMONT: Nov. 9-11, 1990; Champlain Valley Area Convention; Ramada Inn, South Burlington; rsvns.s (800)-2-RAMADA or (802) 658-0250; CVACC, P.O. Box 64714, Burlington, VT 05406

VIRGINIA: Oct. 5-7, 1990; 4th Almost Heaven Area Convention; 4H Center, Front Royal, VA; AHA Convention Committee, P.O. Box 2462, Hagerstown, MD 21741-2462

WEST VIRGINIA: Oct. 26-28, 1990; "True Colors 111," Cedar Lakes, Ripley, W. Va., 25271. Rsvns. at (304) 372-7000. Write Mountaineer RSC at P.O. Box 2381, Westover, W. Va., 26502

WISCONSIN: Oct. 19-21, 1990; 7th Wisconsin State N.A. Convention; Holiday Inn Southeast, Madison, WI. Rsvns (800) 465-4329 or write P.O. Box 14501, Madison, WI 53714.



N.A. Way[®]

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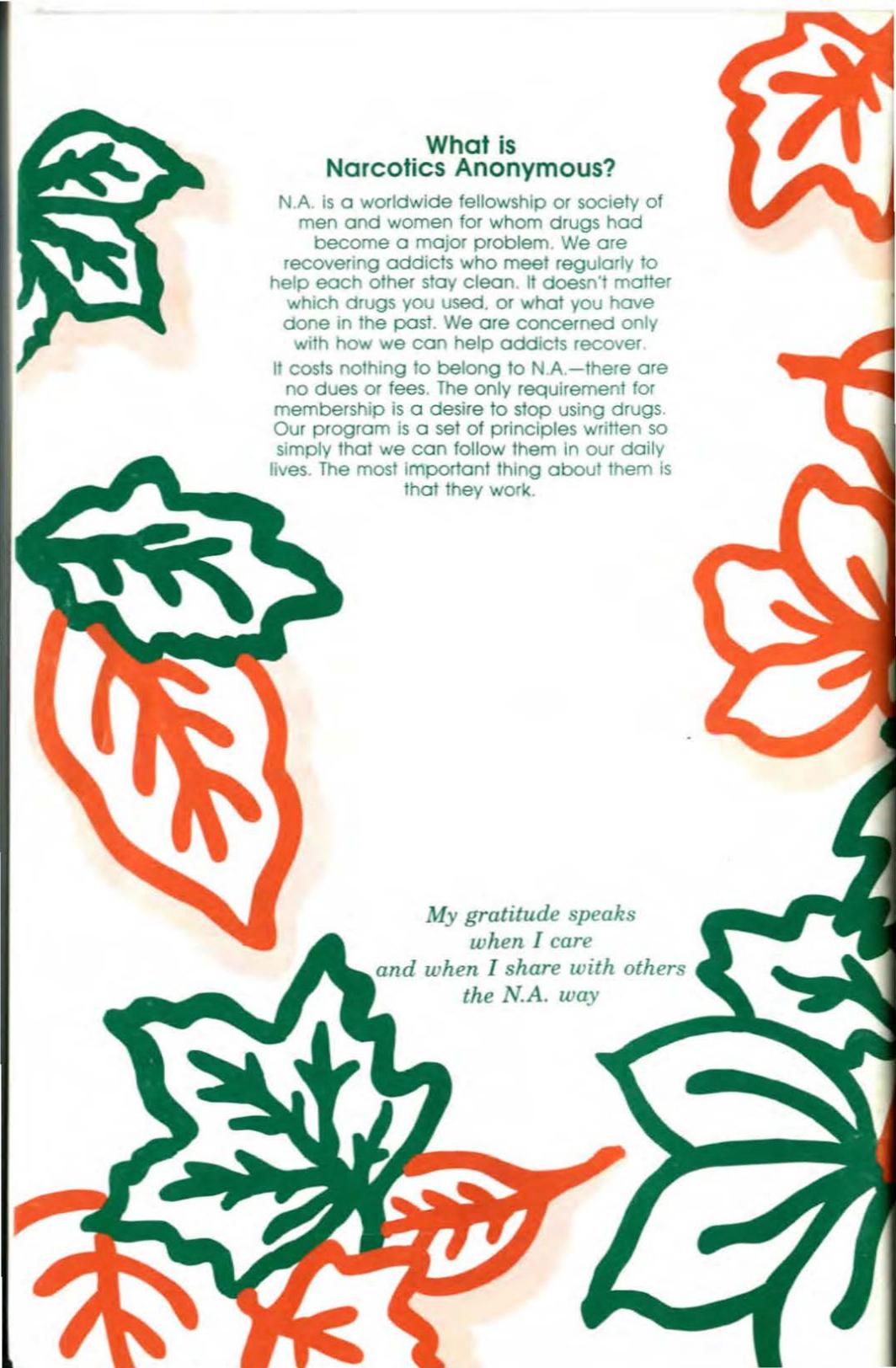
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3TEA

The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Twelve Traditions reprinted for adaptation by permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

The page is decorated with several stylized leaves. Some are green with dark green veins, and others are orange with dark orange veins. The leaves are scattered across the page, with some appearing to be in the foreground and others in the background, creating a sense of depth. The leaves are simple in design, with clear outlines and vein patterns.

What is Narcotics Anonymous?

N.A. is a worldwide fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. It doesn't matter which drugs you used, or what you have done in the past. We are concerned only with how we can help addicts recover.

It costs nothing to belong to N.A.—there are no dues or fees. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using drugs. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that they work.

*My gratitude speaks
when I care
and when I share with others
the N.A. way*